**Minor Athlete Abuse Policy**

**The FISH**

**12/7/20**

**This Policy Applies To:**

* All USA Swimming non-athlete members and adult athlete members;
* Participating non-members (e.g., meet marshals, meet computer operators, timers, etc.);
* LSC and club adult staff and board members; and
* Any other adult authorized to have regular contact with or authority over minor athletes.

**General Requirement**

USA Swimming member clubs and LSCs are required to implement this Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy in full. The Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy must be reviewed and agreed to in writing by all athletes, parents, coaches and other non-athlete members of member clubs on an annual basis with such written agreement to be retained by the club.

**1. One- On- One Interactions**

Except for athletes on the same team or athletes attending the same competition, at no time are unrelated applicable adults permitted to be alone with a minor athlete in a locker room or changing area, except under emergency circumstances. If the organization is using a facility that only has a single locker room or changing area, separate times for use by Applicable Adults must be designated.

An open and observable environment should be maintained for all interactions between adults and athletes. Private, or one-on-one situations, should be avoided unless they are open and observable. Common sense should be used to move a meeting to an open and observable location if the meeting inadvertently begins in private.

Meetings

* 1. Meetings between a minor athlete and an Applicable Adult may only occur if another adult is present and where interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another adult, except under emergency circumstances.
  2. If a one-on-one meeting takes place, the door to the room must remain unlocked and open.
  3. Meetings must not be conducted in an Applicable Adult or athlete’s hotel room or other overnight lodging location during team travel.

Meetings with Mental Health Care Professionals and/or Health Care Providers

If a Mental Health Care Professional and/or Health Care Provider meets with a minor athlete in conjunction with participation, including at practice or competition sites, a closed-door meeting may be permitted to protect patient privacy provided that:

1. The door remains unlocked;
2. Another adult is present at the facility;
3. The other adult is advised that a closed-door meeting is occurring; and
4. Written legal guardian consent is obtained in advance by the Mental Health Care Professional and/or Health Care Provider, with a copy provided to the FISH.

Individual Training Sessions

Individual training sessions outside of the regular course of training and practice between Applicable Adults and minor athletes are permitted if the training session is observable and interruptible by another adult. Legal guardians must be allowed to observe the training session.

**2. Social Media and Electronic Communication**

As with any communication with an athlete, electronic communication should not contain or

relate to any of the following:

1. drugs or alcohol use;
2. sexually oriented conversation; sexually explicit language; sexual activity
3. the adult’s personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems.
4. The guiding principle to always use in communication is to ask: “Is this communication something that someone else would find appropriate or acceptable in a face‐to‐face meeting?” or “Is this something you would be comfortable saying out loud to the intended recipient of your communication in front of the intended recipient’s parents, the coaching staff, the board, or other athletes?”
5. A simple test that can be used in most cases is whether the electronic communication with swimmers is Transparent, Accessible and Professional.

*Transparent:* All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be

transparent. Your communication should not only be clear and direct, but also free of hidden

meanings, innuendo and expectations.

*Accessible:* All electronic communication between coaches and athletes should be considered a

matter of record and part of the Club’s records. Whenever possible, include another coach or

parent in the communication so that there is no question regarding accessibility.

*Professional*: All electronic communication between a coach and an athlete should be

conducted professionally as a representative of the Club. This includes word choices, tone,

grammar, and subject matter that model the standards and integrity of a staff member.

If your communication meets all three of the T.A.P. criteria, then it is likely your method of

communication with athletes will be appropriate.

**Electronic Communication:**

The FISH recognizes the prevalence of electronic communication and social media in today’s

acknowledge the value of these methods of communication, we also realize the associated risks

that must be considered when adults use these methods to communicate with minors.

Hours

Electronic communications such as text and email, must only be sent between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m., unless emergency circumstances exist, or during competition travel.

Prohibited Electronic Communication:

Coaches may have personal social media account, but they are not permitted to maintain private social media connections with unrelated minor athletes. In addition, the coach should remind the athlete that this is not permitted. The FISH has an official social media page where the athletes and their parents can “friend” as an official “fan page”, however athletes cannot contact coaches privately through this social avenue. When communicating with an athlete through email, a parent, another coach, or a board member must also be copied.

**Request to Discontinue All Electronic Communications**

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted

by coaches through any form of electronic communication.

**3**. **Travel and Local:**

The FISH travel policy must be signed and agreed to by all athletes, parents, coaches

and other adults traveling with the club.

1. Local Travel:
   1. Local travel consists of travel to training, practice and competition that occurs locally and does not include coordinated overnight stay(s).
   2. Applicable Adults must not ride in a vehicle alone with an unrelated minor athlete, absent emergency circumstances, and must always have at least two minor athletes or another adult in the vehicle, unless otherwise agreed to by the minor athlete’s legal guardian.
   3. Legal guardians must pick up their minor athlete first and drop off their minor athlete last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement.
2. Team Travel
   1. During overnight team travel, athletes rooming together shall be of the same

gender, and preferably similar age.

* 1. Chaperones and coaches should stay in nearby rooms. When athletes are age 12 and Under, same-gender chaperones may room with the athletes; in this case, written consent should be given by the athlete’s parent or legal guardian.
  2. Team managers and chaperones must be members of USA Swimming and have successfully passed a USA Swimming-administered criminal background check.
  3. Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling, or spouse of that particular athlete).
  4. There will be no male athletes in female athletes’ rooms, and no female athletes in male athletes’ rooms.
  5. A copy of the Club Code of Conduct must be signed by the athlete and his/her
  6. parent or legal guardian.
  7. Team officials should obtain a signed Liability Release and/or Indemnification Form for each athlete.
  8. Team officials should carry a signed Medical Consent or Authorization to Treat Form for each athlete. Curfews shall be established by the team staff each day of the trip. The directions & decisions of coaches/team manager are final.
  9. Swimmers are expected to remain with the team at all times during the trip.
  10. Swimmers are not to leave the competition venue, the hotel, a restaurant, or any other place at which the team has gathered without the permission/knowledge of the coach or chaperone.

1. Visiting Public Places
   1. When visiting public places such as shopping malls, movie theatres, etc. swimmers will stay in groups of no less than three persons. 12 & Under athletes will be accompanied by a coach or chaperone.
      1. **Locker Room Conduct**

# There shall be no misbehavior in the locker room area. All swimmers must be respectful of each facility’s locker room as we are representing the FISH at all times. We must respect other’s privacy as well. Photographing or recording another swimmer is prohibited. Recording or photographing a swimmer withing a published article or video recording (including video streaming) of swimming competitions (“publication”) should only be done with parents’ consent per the Photography Consent Form.

Monitoring

The club must regularly and randomly monitor the use of locker rooms and changing

areas to ensure compliance with this Policy. Locker rooms and changing areas may be

monitored by the use of the following methods:

1. Conducting a sweep of the locker room or changing area before athletes arrive;
2. Posting staff directly outside the locker room or changing area during periods of use;
3. Leaving the doors open when adequate privacy is still possible; and/or
4. Making occasional sweeps of the locker rooms or changing areas with women checking on female locker rooms and men checking on male locker rooms.
5. Every effort must be made to recognize when a minor athlete goes to the locker room

or changing area during practice and competition, and, if the minor athlete does not return in a timely fashion, to check on the minor athlete’s whereabouts.

Legal Guardians in Locker Rooms or Changing Areas

* 1. Legal guardians are discouraged from entering locker rooms and changing areas.
  2. If a legal guardian does enter a locker room or changing area, it must only be a same-sex legal guardian and the legal guardian should notify a coach or administrator in advance.
     1. **MASSAGES AND RUBDOWNS/ATHLETE TRAINING MODALITIES**

Definition: In this section, the term “Massage” refers to any massage, rubdown, athletic

training modality including physical modalities (e.g., stretching, physical manipulation,

injury rehabilitation, etc.) and electronic or instrument assisted modalities (e.g., stim

treatment, dry needling, cupping, etc.).

1. Any Massage performed on an athlete must be conducted in an open and interruptible location and must be performed by a licensed massage therapist or other certified professional. However, even if a coach is a licensed massage therapist, the coach must not perform a rubdown or massage of an athlete under any circumstance.

**Additional Minor Athlete Requirements**

1. Written consent by a legal guardian must be obtained in advance by the licensed massage therapist or other certified professional, with a copy provided to The FISH.
2. Legal guardians must be allowed to observe the Massage.
3. Any Massage of a minor athlete must be done with at least one other adult present and must never be done with only the minor athlete and the person performing the Massage in the room.
4. Any Massage of a minor athlete must only occur after a proper diagnosis from a treating physician and be done in the course of care according to the physician’s treatment plan.